

## Your Area and You

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I do not have a vagina. Most people can't tell by looking. Nobody's ever said a word to me when I'm in the women's restroom, whether I'm in the queer mecca of the Bay Area or the straight mecca of Omaha, Nebraska. In the tranny community, I have what's known as the privilege of passing.

I'm no particular rush to get a vagina. I'm not opposed to the idea, and if I had sufficient disposable income I might do it, but otherwise it's not a big deal. It doesn't affect my self-image as female much one way or the other.

Like much of my generation, the first vagina I saw was in a magazine. Probably *Hustler* or *Penthouse*, something like that. I couldn't have been more than six or seven years old. The closeup of this hairy, extremely biological thing was nightmarish to me. It was as nightmarish as the movie *Alien*, which I had recently watched while peeking out from behind my mother's recliner, terrified and repulsed by the images on the screen. A porno probably would have had the same effect.

Whatever social conditioning causes most boys to worship their penis passed me by. Its reasons to exist seemed to be piddling, and the occasional meaningless boner—usually when I had to stand up at school. Even when I started to masturbate, I still didn't think there was anything special about the organ itself. I had no idea it was a symbol for so many things, that it was supposed to confer privilege, that men wage bloody wars over size.

I began to realize at a young age that I wasn't really a boy, but it didn't occur to me that my penis had anything to do with it. I couldn't see between the legs of girls, so what difference did it make? The connection I felt to them was based on

what showed and how we interacted, on how I felt when I was around them. As hair began to grow on my face, and my body changed in other ways, what was between our legs mattered even less.

Put simply, I do not feel like a boy because I have a penis. I do not feel like *less* of a girl because I don't have a vagina.

Now, if I could snap my fingers and either have a flat stomach or a vagina, I'd go for the flat stomach. No question. I suppose that says more about my laziness than anything else. I mean, if I want a flat stomach, I should go to a gym, right? Here's the thing, though: even if I worked out forty hours a week and ate nothing but brown rice, vegetables and tofu, I would not develop a vagina. Not even Pilates can do *that*.

Right now, I want the flat stomach more. I know that when I see pictures from this event, I'm going to think to myself, "God, I look so fat!" This is a dangerous, almost seditious thing to say in the Bay Area, but my self-image as female more to do the shape of my body than my genitals. It has nothing to do with other girls. It's just that I was very large as a boy, and my eternally round belly is like a constant reminder of who I used to be. By the way, I'd like to thank you all for coming to our production of *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler, and...oh, right! This is *The Vagina Monologues*. Sorry. I got confused for a moment.

Having willfully surrendered my male privilege, I know there are some very practical reasons for me to have a vagina. It could save my life.

In my mind, it goes like this: I may get raped someday. I'll fight and resist, but he might overpower me. When he discovers that he was attempting to forcibly enter what *he* would consider to be another man, homosexual panic may embolden whatever sick rage led his soul to this dark place. I'm not saying that if I have a vagina, I'll walk away. Women with vaginas are raped and murdered every day. That's why we're here, that's what V-Day is all about, to put an end to that. But if

I have a penis, and the rapist hates dirty, unnatural faggots like me as much as he hates women--half as much, one-*tenth* as much--I may follow Gwen Araujo into that shallow grave.

I don't know. Maybe I'm just afraid. Maybe I'm afraid of what might happen if I had a vagina. Maybe my world would explode. Maybe I'd finally have a sex organ I can relate to, and it would be the missing piece to the puzzle which is my life. Maybe it would make me complete in ways I have never suspected possible, and in turn, I would finally understand joy.

Maybe I fear my *potential*.

See, I want to take on the world. I want to be Yoko Ono crossed with Courtney Love, to bear the sins of humanity, to take the blame for the weaknesses of men, to go too far because *someone* has to. I want feel the sexual pleasures which I have allowed myself to believe I do not deserve. I want to find my moan. I will pound nails into the coffin of my old life and blow it straight to hell. The ruins of the old covenant will be drenched in the blood which my body will never produce. And I will not *care* anymore. Anyone who stands between me and what I desire will be cast aside as I open my legs to the heavens and cry out, *LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH!*

...or not.



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